

hours, so the American people are kept better informed of what their Members are doing and how they are voting in committee.

Madam Speaker, the rejection by the American people of the Democrats' reckless spending emphasizes the importance of fiscal responsibility, doesn't it? This is the reason I incorporated the Congressional Budget Accountability Act into my plan.

Each year, my colleagues and I receive a fixed budget for all office expenses. We call that the MRA, or the Members' Representational Allowance. This bill would codify that our unused MRA funds must be returned to the Treasury for debt and deficit reduction.

Along these lines, I have also included what is called the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which will preclude any Member of Congress from being eligible for a pay adjustment, a so-called COLA, if we have incurred a budget deficit in the previous fiscal year.

We may not have a balanced budget amendment, Madam Speaker, but that doesn't mean we can't balance the budget, and I want to hold our feet to the fire. This is yet another way that we can do that.

Also in the package, Madam Speaker, is a bill to prevent Federal employees from engaging in union activity on official time. It is amazing that this goes on, but we have estimated that in a 5-year period of time we could save the taxpayer over \$600 million and \$1.2 billion in a 10-year period of time.

Put simply, it is unacceptable that government employees paid with, yes, your tax dollars, are currently permitted to spend time during their workday performing union activities. I have already given you the savings.

Equally unacceptable is that legislators in Washington commonly attach legislation that cannot pass on its own merits to unrelated must-pass bills. Let me give you an example, Military Construction-VA.

A couple of years ago, we passed that out of committee with an almost 100 percent bipartisan vote. The Democratic majority held that bill up for 100 days because they wanted to attach an unpopular bill, something like the Dream Act or Don't Ask, Don't Tell, some controversial bill, and put our veterans at jeopardy. They literally held them hostage. This bill, Madam Speaker, would say from now on, no attaching unpopular bills to good standalone bills, especially if they are for our veterans and the military.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, while these bills may seem like a small start compared to the big challenges we have ahead of us in this Congress, the 112th, it is a pathway to start changing business as usual in Washington and fulfill the promises we made on November 2 to the American people.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE PROSPERITY CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my hope that historians will look back on the 112th Congress as the session that restored American prosperity and to express my strong agreement with the new leaders of this House who have declared that every action of this body must be measured against this goal.

We speak of jobs, jobs, jobs, but jobs are merely a byproduct of prosperity. And prosperity is the product of freedom. Government does not create jobs or wealth. It merely redistributes them. Jobs and wealth can only be created through the free exchange of goods and services in a free market. Government's role is to create and protect the conditions which promote prosperity.

If I give you a dollar for a cup of coffee, what's going on in that transaction? I'm telling you that your cup of coffee is worth more to me than my dollar. And at the same time, you're telling me that my dollar is worth more to you than your cup of coffee. We make that exchange and both of us go away with something of greater value than we took in. Each of us goes away richer. That's the freedom that creates prosperity. That simple exchange, whether it's for a cup of coffee or a multibillion-dollar acquisition, is what creates wealth.

But now suppose some third party butts its nose into this transaction: Oh, no, the coffee has got to be between 110 and 130 degrees and it has to include a swizzle stick; it has to be consumed more than 25 feet from the point of sale. And on and on and on. Every one of these restrictions reduces the value of that exchange for the one or the both of us.

That's the fundamental problem that we face today. Our government has not only failed to protect the freedom that creates prosperity, but it has become destructive of that freedom. To create jobs, we must restore prosperity; and to restore prosperity, we must restore freedom. We must restore the freedom of choice that gives consumers the ultimate say over the output of our economy. In a free and prosperous society, consumers vote every day with their own dollars on what kind of light bulbs they prefer or on how they want to get to work or what foods they like or how much water they want to put in their toilets or what kind of cars they want or what kind of housing they desire. These consumer choices signal every day what things are actually worth and what our economy will actually produce.

Government is destroying the elegant simplicity of this process, and Congress must reverse this destruction. We must restore the freedom of individuals to enjoy the fruits of their own labor so that they can make these decisions for themselves once again. That's why excessive government spending is so destructive to prosperity. It destroys the freedom of individuals to make their own decisions over what to spend and where to invest their own money. It robs them of both the ability and the incentives to create prosperity.

Presidents like Coolidge, Truman, Reagan, and Clinton, who have reduced government spending relative to GDP, all produced dramatic increases in productivity and prosperity and the general welfare of our Nation. And Presidents like Hoover, Roosevelt, Bush, and Obama, who have increased government spending relative to GDP, all produced or prolonged or deepened periods of economic recession and hardship and malaise. Our government is now embarked upon the latter course, and this Congress must reverse this direction.

Government has an important role to play in the marketplace. It's there to ensure that representations are accurate and that contracts are enforced. You have to tell the truth. You have to keep your promises. And government has an important role to play in ensuring that. Government exists to ensure that the currency is stable and reliable and that property rights are secure. When it fulfills this fundamental role, it maximizes the freedom that a buyer and seller have to assess their own needs and resources and to make those exchanges that allow both to go away better off than they were.

Madam Speaker, let us together revive and restore the freedom and prosperity of this Nation and fulfill that sacred command inscribed on our Liberty Bell: "To proclaim liberty throughout all the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### REPEAL OF HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. This coming Wednesday, in really the first order of real business of the House, we are voting on health care reform repeal. The new Republican majority has decided that this is the most important issue, even though they know that it's political theater, a charade. It may pass the House, but it won't pass the Senate, and certainly the President would veto it. So this is not becoming law.